

The Rainbow Seniors Logo



***Promoting and addressing life issues affecting the  
general welfare of older gay, lesbian, bisexual,  
transgender, and intersex (GLBTI) individuals***

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## *The Empty Closet*

**November 2004****Friends and Families****by John VanOrman**

Thank God for Rainbow Seniors, and it happened when I least expected it.

Several years ago, when I was doing proofreading for the Empty Closet, I was always commenting to Susan Jordan, "why isn't there any organization for the older gay and lesbian people?"

One day she gave me an article and said, "I think this is what you've been looking for...." and it was.

As Michael Nava wrote in his book, "The Hidden Law," we are the only people born into the enemy camp, regardless of color, nationality or religion....gay babies get born into straight families and how we survive it all is a miracle."

Growing up in the 40's in a divided family has it's own problems, then the hell of high school and knowing I was different but there was nothing to confirm how and what I was feeling.

I'm sure my family was trying to figure me out, but I couldn't figure me out.

Being drafted in 1950 was one of the best things to happen to me. After basic training, we were stationed near Baltimore, and getting to know the city, I became aware of the gay establishments and formed friendships that stayed with me for years and allowed me to know that I wasn't alone.

After being discharged in 1952, I stayed in Baltimore and began working in my chosen profession that I loved up to my retirement.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that friends become like families and they give our lives meaning, purpose, and love as time goes on.

As we get older and time invades our lives, we find ourselves facing the loss of so many friends dear to us, and our lives begin to change as our circle gets smaller.

Health problems, loneliness, and isolation set in, and our lives seem less important, but I have some great friends both gay and straight who give me a kick when I need it most.

Rainbow Seniors has given me back a big part of my life. It not only provides a purpose and a reason to get involved with new people and life, but really for the first time to acknowledge my own sexuality.

So check us out. We meet the 3rd Sunday of each month at the Unitarian Church on the corner of South Clinton and Court Street at 4 p.m. For more information, check us out at

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our Web site at [www.rainbowseniorswny.org](http://www.rainbowseniorswny.org). I hope you'll come and join with us and be a part of this group of friends and family. We need and care about you.



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